



Lower dropout rates attributed to improved school support committees

Equipped with knowledge, members of support committees pay visits to households of students missing classes, helping them stay at school.

Ev Sokhoeun, a school support committee member and the vice village chief, whose four grand children attend the Pu Hoam primary school in Mondul Kiri province, wants them to obtain the best quality education. This is one of the reasons why he stops by the school every day on his way to work to check on teacher and student attendance.

“I am involved in the monitoring of the school because I like education and want this school to be a good school. It is important for me to monitor the students and seek reasons for their absence,” he says.

A committee member of a few years, he is eager to explain that this support body wasn't very active prior to the capacity building trainings he attended.

“I learnt about my responsibilities from trainings and a field trip CARE sent me on to a primary school in Kampot province. where I saw how well a school can operate when the community is involved,” the man recounts.

Now that he knows how to assist the local primary school, whenever a student is absent he pays a visit to his or her household to find out the reason behind it.

“By doing this I want to help the community and to communicate the importance of education to the parents,” he says.

Sometimes students stop coming to school because they have to help their parents with the harvest. Other times, Ev points out, “they are slow learners and they stop going to school because they are ashamed of this.”

Regardless of the reason, each time he does his best to talk the parents and the student out of dropping out of school.

“I talk to the parents and students whenever they want to drop out. I talk to them about the importance of education. Sometimes I take another student with me and I compare him or her to the student who wants to leave school and explain the advantages he has over the children that won't get an education.”

And it seems that he is not the only school support committee member in Mondul Kiri province, who made keeping children at school his priority—directors in multiple primary schools attribute lower dropout rates to the determination and activity of committee members.

At Pu Hoam primary school, for example, school director Chaim Sopheak, proudly explained that this year no



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students dropped out - five moved to another school - while last year seven children ceased their education.

Likewise, in the Dam Dak primary school, according to the school's director, Son Mao, this year saw 14 students drop out as compared to 30 students in 2015.

The examples of these schools in Mondul Kiri illustrate what research has already proved in Ratanak Kiri—training School Support Committees can lead to a significant improvement in students staying in school.

These activities are part of the *School Governance* project, which is supported by the Capacity Development Partnership Fund.



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